



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

August 16, 2005

The Honorable William H. Frist
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harry M. Reid
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Leader:

The U.S. Congress has not passed a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) since 2000. Prior to 2000, WRDA bills usually passed every two years. As you know, WRDA 2000 included the historic Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Act (CERP), the largest ecosystem restoration effort in our country's history. To continue the progress we have made on restoring America's Everglades and to ensure that it will serve as a model for future restorations throughout the country and the world, we urge you to schedule Senate floor time for debate and passage of the Water Resources Development Act of 2005 this fall.

WRDA 2005 authorizes two important Everglades projects: the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) and the Picayune Strand Restoration (PSR). These two projects - IRL at the northern tip of the Everglades ecosystem and PSR in the southwest section of the Everglades ecosystem - are essential to "getting the water right." IRL will restore natural sheet flow to the Everglades ecosystem by re-directing water to the Everglades instead of out to the ocean, provide reservoirs for storage of water in the wet season and release in the dry season, build stormwater treatment facilities to improve the water quality of the water flowing through the Everglades ecosystem and remove millions of cubic yards of muck from the St. Lucie Estuary. PSR will re-establish the natural sheet flow to the Ten Thousand Islands, restore 72,320 acres of habitat, and restore ecological connectivity of the Florida Panthers National Wildlife Refuge, the Belle Meade State Conservation and Recreation Lands Project Area and the Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve. For these reasons, these projects need to be authorized and completed.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,


Bill Nelson


Mel Martinez